

A Great Gun

By GRETCHEN GRAYDON

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"Oh, yes! Billy has it again, and this time very bad," Mrs. Wheat said, nodding across at her son. "But you won't wonder at it when you hear the new sweetheart's name—Sarah-Susan—Miss Sarah-Susan Gunn."

Billy turned all colors. Connor, his chum, laughed excitedly and said, "You seem as though you could do it. Billy, I call that positively immoral! You had better be courting twins. How ever will you do it? You may propose to Susan and be rejected or accepted by Billy. You may even be married wrong. Think, too, of being always a mere gunner's mate!"

"Shut up!" Billy interjected, his face scarlet, but grinning in spite of himself. "Wait till you've seen her at least. Mother makes fun of her name because she can't find fault with her any way else. And Sue isn't to blame. She didn't name herself or choose the family she had to be born in."

"No, but you do choose the family you marry into," Mrs. Wheat cooed. She was less than twenty years older than Billy and still a very pretty and very lively woman.

Connor thought her stunning. So did his Uncle Tim. Harking back suddenly in his mind to something a year old, he whistled aloud and asked abruptly: "Say, Mammy Wheat, is it the same way with Tim? Did you turn him down because you wouldn't be Mrs. O'Toole?"

It was mammy's turn to blush. The blush made her younger and prettier than ever. "Who says I had the chance to be Mrs. O'Toole?" she began, but stopped as both the youngsters growled derision and unbelief.

"Tim was the worst ever," Connor said decidedly; "couldn't eat or sleep; used to hang out of the windows all 'round week just to stare up the street toward where you were staying; in the greatest dicker, too, to get his place fixed up new. And then, after he'd walked about with you one teeny half hour, he quit—cut out everything except my allowance and scooted across the pond with just half a steamer kit. Don't say you don't know why, mammy! It won't do any good—not with us two. We know. He wanted—because you sent him. Poor old Tim! You have a heap on your conscience, mammy! How could you do it?"

"Don't you understand, Larry, dear?" mammy said, still blushing. "It was all on your account. I couldn't bear to supplant you." Her eyes laughed, but Larry Connor saw under the laughter. "If that was your game you were blind," he said. "Don't you see, Tim is so near the years of indiscretion—they begin at forty-five—he'll sure fall victim somehow somewhere. You ought to have taken him, mammy. Then, indeed, my future would have been secure."

"Where is he? Have you heard from him lately?" mammy asked, her eyes suddenly downcast.

Larry shook his head. "He was tearing around toward the midnight sun—thought maybe the icebergs would remind him of you," he said. "But that was six months back—long enough for him to be buried or married."

"He always talked of Ireland"—mammy began, sighing faintly.

"But he didn't care for it unless you were there to see it with him," Larry interrupted. "I think I'll cable him to come back right away. Maybe he will be ready to sacrifice himself for your whim—carry off the adorable Gunn and so save Billy."

"I had rather—almost—she had Billy," mammy said inconsequently. "Tim is a dear, but—Hon. Mrs. Timothy O'Toole! Dear me, I could cry when I think of it! Why wasn't he born something else?"

"Smith, Jones, Brown or Robinson," Larry commented.

Mrs. Wheat got up and walked quickly away.

Billy went to the window. Larry, staring after the vanishing lady, was amazed to see her head droop and her bosom swell. Clearly she was on the point of sobbing. He followed her softly and said as she flung herself on a couch: "Tell me, mammy! You're playing a game. What is it?"

"How did you guess?" mammy said, speaking very low, with her finger on her lip. "You mustn't ever let Billy guess it," she said. "He doesn't know about our money. It came to me from my uncle, the dearest, straitlaced soul. He thought second marriages sinful—spiritual bigamy, he called them. So I kept my fortune, which will be Billy's fortune, on condition of remaining always a widow. Now you see why I had to send Tim away."

"As if he cared for your money! And he'd never let Billy lose," Larry said exultantly. But he bent his head reverently to his mammy's hand as she added: "But, oh, you are a brick! You made up all this about the name to blind that blessed boy!"

"I had to—there—there wasn't anything else. Tim was such a gentleman," Mrs. Wheat said, smothering a sob. "You won't tell him, Larry, but all this teasing over him from suspecting, I don't really oppose him, although I think he is making a mistake. He has promised to wait a year—long enough to find it out for himself."

"What's wrong with her?" Larry asked.

"Everything, but mostly that she's too old and wise and hard," Mrs. Wheat said comprehensively. "I mean that she was born too old; actually they are but a month apart. She is much too

clever to care really for my dear, big, blundering, pretty boy, but she cares a whole lot for what he can give her. You ought to see her crying my pearls. I could forgive her a little if she had no pearls of her own. To be rich and grasping is so much worse than to yearn for what one never has had. I could break up the match tomorrow by letting her know I hold the purse strings, but that would lose me my boy, and he's everything."

"She shan't have him, and you shan't lose him. Listen! I've got an idea," Larry said. Mammy bent toward him, her brimless eyes shining. They talked in whispers for two minutes, then Larry rushed away, headed for the telephone office.

Exactly three weeks later, Mammy Wheat, with Larry in attendance, went up to the city upon a steamer day. The pair got back late to Fernbrook and slipped into the hotel by the side entrance wholly unseen. But soon there was inscribed upon the register in Larry's most sprawling hand, "Mr. and Mrs. F. T. O'Toole-Merrion, Mount Merrion, County Meath, Ireland." And underneath, in Greek letters, "They've found it."

"What's all that about?" Billy said, coming up and leaning over Larry's shoulder. Larry laid hold on him, saying, "Get your Gunn and come see." As he dragged Billy toward the main stairway he added: "Don't you get heart failure. You'll come out all right, if only you live through it."

Sarah-Susan, in wait for Billy, was easily carried along. As the three entered mammy's private parlor they saw her standing beside a tall, handsome fellow, baldish and grayish, to be sure, but roddy and with the happiest merry eyes. Shamelessly he put his arms around mammy, not even giving Billy a finger until he had said: "I had to have her, even if it meant changing my name and nation, son. Sure, life was no life without her. Wish me joy, lad, of me new home and a wife in it."

"I do," Billy said, giving her a hug. Sarah-Susan bridled. Larry in his most innocent fashion began to explain. Before he had said fifty words she wheeled upon mammy.

"As you have beggared your son, madam, for your whim, understand I refuse to countenance your duplicity. I agree with your late uncle. Such conduct is positively immoral."

As she spoke she had been stripping herself of Billy's ring, a simple affair of thready gold with a diamond spark on it. But she quite forgot the diamond pendant at her wrist, the circle of brilliants about her arm, not to name many more jewels resting upon her dressing table. Majestically she tossed the ring to Billy—poor crestfallen Billy, who stood at his mother's side.

But when Mrs. O'Toole-Merrion drew his head to her breast and patted it as she had done when he was three years old, he lifted it heavily and smiled up at her, saying: "It hurts, mammy, but I'm not going to cry. And I'm not going to starve either. Tim will see to that."

"Sure," Tim said, hugging his new son. Mammy and Larry considerably looked away.

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In a good part of Berlin—that is, in one of the most desirable locations—one can get a flat for anything from \$20 to \$60 a month for less than \$150 if it could be found at all. I have such an apartment in mind, and it is only one among thousands in Berlin. It is on the third floor, and German flathouses are seldom more than four or six stories high. It does not lie in a straight, unbeautiful line along a narrow, dark highway, but is built around a big square atrium that might be used for a reception room if it were needed. The rooms are enormous and each has outside windows.

The bathroom is as large as an ordinary "inside" bedroom, as we know bedrooms, and it is fitted up with every modern luxury conceivable, including a splendid shower. The kitchen is too nice to be true, says a writer in *Leslie's Weekly*. It is lined halfway up with beautiful blue and white tiles. It has a white tile floor, and its gas range is made of blue and white tile to match the walls. It has a blue and white tile refrigerator built in the wall, and there are rows of white porcelain jars upon white tile shelves to keep things in. It would be absolutely impossible for such a kitchen to be dirty.

Evolution of the Sword.
During the first twelve centuries of the Christian era the sword varied little in the essential features from the lines of the broadsword. The blade was lengthened, it is true, and less curved, but the crosspieces of the hilt were usually straight, and the simple, workmanlike look was preserved. The change to the elaborate hilts of several centuries later was made gradually. There were slight changes in the crosspieces from time to time—the stiff straight lines of little began to curve gently toward the blade. The knob at the end of the handle, usually a simple disk or ball of metal, was varied into a trefol, a cutting or a small Maltese cross. Blades and scabbards were engraved with inscriptions, a practice which had indeed been found in Danish barrows bearing unmistakable Etruscan characters cut in the bronze blades. The cross hilted sword the crusaders carried on their pious errand to the Holy Land not infrequently displayed the sacred monogram either carved or

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